

The recent occurrence of a Yellow-billed Spoonbill (*Platalea flavipes*) and Intermediate Egrets (*Egretta intermedia*) in New Zealand (Billing 1977, Seddon & Seddon 1979) and the regular movement of Little Egrets (*E. garzetta*) and Cattle Egrets (*Bubulcus ibis*) to and from Australia suggest that these juvenile Royal Spoonbills could have come from Australia. However, as a small colony of Royal Spoonbills was discovered in November 1979 at Vernon Lagoons, Marlborough, and had reputedly bred also the previous year (R. N. Holdaway, pers. comm.), it is also possible that both groups of juvenile Royal Spoonbills seen at the Manawatu Estuary were raised in New Zealand.

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BLACK-WINGED PETRELS ON PORTLAND ISLAND

Portland Island, 137 ha, at 39° 18'S 177° 52'E, is situated off the tip of Mahia Peninsula at the north-east of Hawkes Bay. It comprises 14 ha of lighthouse reserve and 123 ha of grassland on which sheep are run. There are mice on the island but no rats or cats. No petrels have previously been reported breeding there.

Since before Christmas, an occasional high-pitched call from a bird on the wing has been heard after dark. A search in the evening of January 11 revealed three Black-winged Petrels (*Pterodroma nigripennis*) in a grassy gully 500 metres north of the lighthouse reserve. One was captured and photographed, and the identification was confirmed by Mr Imber of the Wildlife Service, Wellington.

Calls were heard more frequently during February; a few incoming birds were seen at dusk and one at 0920 on the 12th, but no nest burrows could be found in the capture or any other area until February 16 when nine (and as many 'blind' burrows) were discovered in spinifex-covered sand about 50 metres above high water line 2 km north of the station.



FIGURE 1 — Black-winged Petrel, Portland Island.

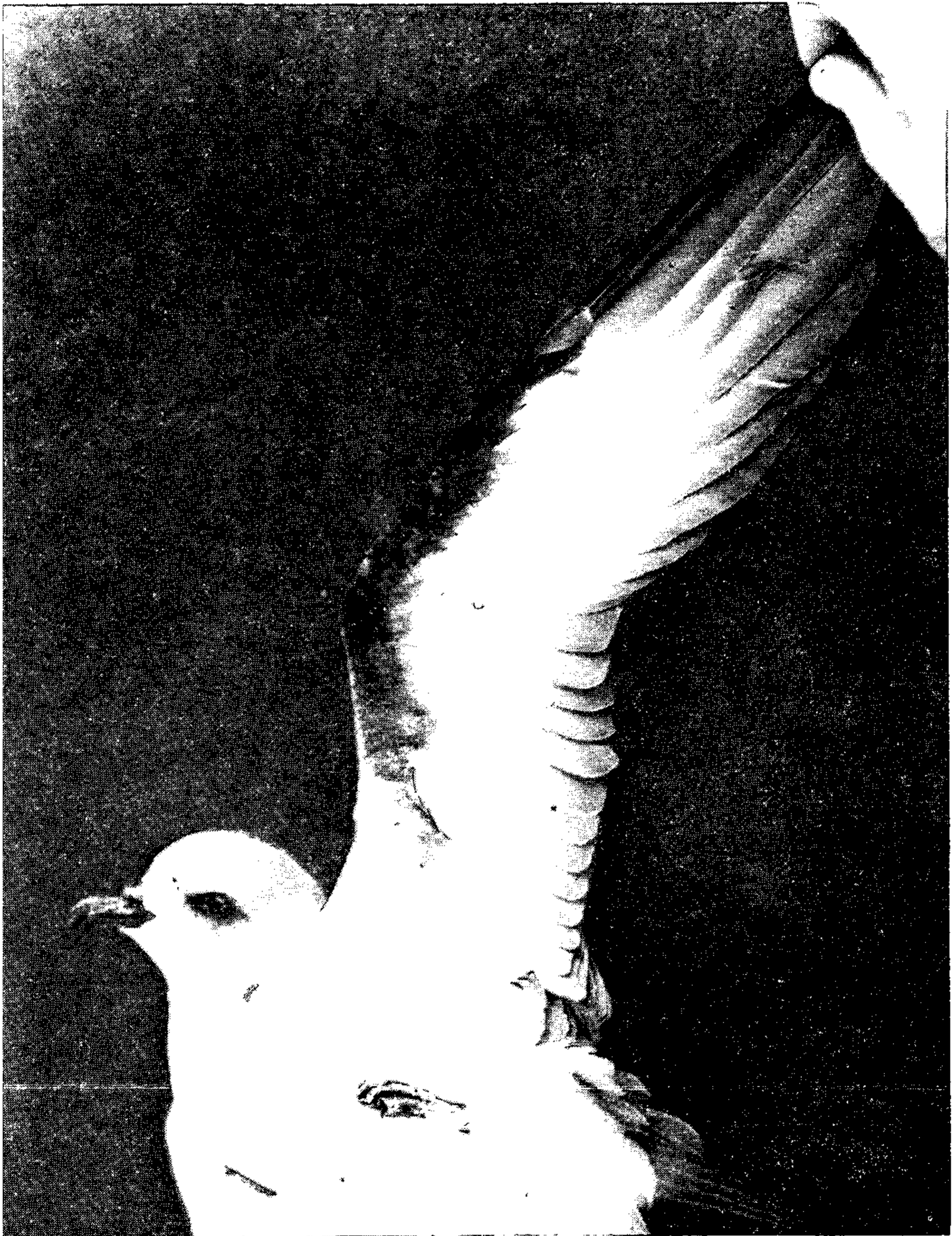


FIGURE 2 — Black-winged Petrel, Portland Island.

One burrow entrance was enlarged to allow a weekly check to be made. One adult bird was in the nest chamber with a single egg. This was the case until 9 March, when an estimated five-day-old chick was alone in the nest. The nearest burrow, 1 metre away, contained two adults but no egg or chick. On 6 May, the chick seemed to be doing well.

During February and March, birds were sometimes seen by day over the island, but none flew or called in the conspicuous way described elsewhere, except occasionally at dusk.

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FIGURE 3 — Black-winged Petrel, Portland Island.



FIGURE 4 — Burrow and chick of Black-winged Petrel, Portland Island.